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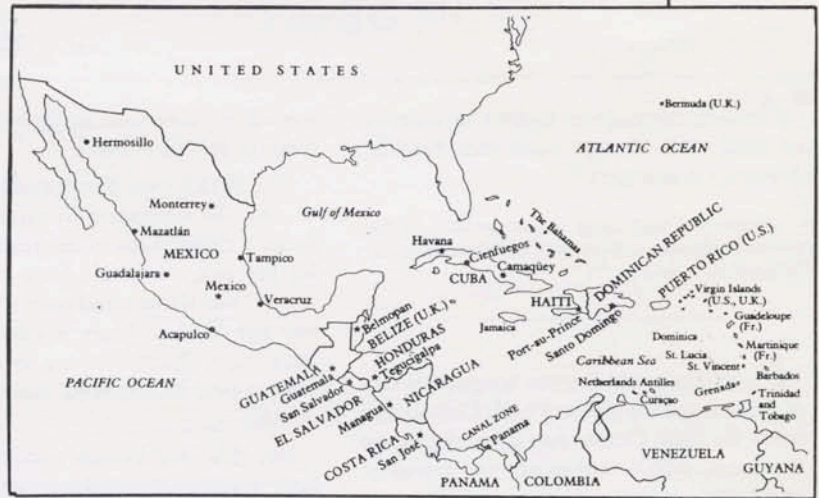
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The U.S. in Central America and the Caribbean

Regaining our Sphere of Influence

by Michael J. Kryzanek



Central America and the Caribbean

The revolution in Central America has not only helped most Americans learn where El Salvador and Nicaragua are situated on the map, but, more importantly, it has placed before them two opposing interpretations of what is actually going on in that part of the world. By the Reagan Administration, the American public is told that the fighting in this region is a result of communist expansionism. The Salvadoran rebels, in concert with the Nicaraguans and the Cubans, are seeking to spread their influence and establish Marxist satellite states. Those who disagree with the Reagan position claim that the outbreak of revolution stems from social and economic inequality. After decades of elite rule maintained through corrupt, repressive and unlawful means, peasants and the urban poor are taking up weapons to bring an end to the injustice.

Although these two approaches to the conflict in Central America both evolve from defensible positions, the American public should be aware that the turmoil in this region can be examined from a third perspective. The revolutions in Nicaragua and El Salvador have also occurred because United States influence is declining in this strategic area; and as a result, our ability to contain the fighting and direct the future development of these countries is diminishing.

Since the turn of the century, the nation-states that rim the Caribbean have become part of our sphere of influence. The direction and development of these nations has been closely linked to, if not controlled, by decisions made in Washington.

Presidents, starting with Theodore Roosevelt, have felt an obligation to intervene whenever economic and political circumstances in this region warranted action. Not surprisingly, American corporations targeted the area as ripe for investment and profit making; tourists streamed down to the beaches and casinos thinking of these countries as mere extensions of American soil; and military and diplomatic strategists felt little hesitation in recommending the sending of troops or civilian advisors to secure the peace or straighten out the finances of our neighbors in a manner reminiscent of a landlord taking care of his property.

For a good portion of the twentieth century the United States maintained without significant challenge its hold on the Central American-Caribbean sphere of influence. But a series of events starting with the Cuban revolution in 1959 weakened our hold on the region, and helped contribute to the unrest in places like El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The Breakup of the Central American-Caribbean Sphere of Influence

Castro's Geopolitical Revolution

Cuba's revolution of 1959 and its subsequent drift into Marxism has been the topic of endless analysis. Debates still rage over whether the United States should have acted more forcefully to bring the Castro regime down or whether we needlessly

created animosity with a communist regime one hundred miles from our shores. The debates notwithstanding, the fact remains that Fidel Castro developed a Soviet satellite in our traditional sphere of influence and thereby singlehandedly transformed the geopolitical forces in the Central American-Caribbean region. For the first time a revolution with definite anti-American overtones led by an avowed communist succeeded in our "backyard."

Not surprisingly, the history of U.S.-Cuban relations since 1959 has been marked by a series of attempts to topple the Castro government and reassert our complete domination in the hemisphere. Almost immediately upon Castro's revolutionary victory, the United States responded with sugar embargoes, diplomatic slights and harsh words. Later on the American public would find out about our clandestine efforts to "destabilize" the Castro regime through assassination, sabotage and the infamous Bay of Pigs invasion.

But despite these efforts, Castro held on and in some respects even flourished. With considerable Soviet aid (now estimated at over three billion dollars a year), a supportive population and some wise social programs aimed at eradicating disease and illiteracy, Castro managed to hold up to the world an alternative to United States capitalism and liberal democracy. Within a matter of a few years, the United States and the American way were being challenged by an upstart revolutionary. What is perhaps even more significant is that Castro's triumph was well received throughout Latin



The Big Stick in the Caribbean Sea

Rogers in New York Herald, c. 1905,
courtesy New York Sun, Inc.

America. After years of United States control and domination, the Latins finally could look to someone who was successful in breaking the American hold on this region.

As the Cuban revolution enjoys its 25th anniversary, the excitement and aura that it once created has disappeared. There is much to criticize about the industrial and agricultural failures, the political prisoners and the dependence on the Soviet Union. The development problems inside Cuba, however, do not diminish the fact that Castro's revolution not only changed life in that country, but also radically altered the face of hemispheric power relations. Castro's revolution served notice that America was no longer unchallenged in the geographic region closest to its border.

OPEC and the Rise of Competition

While Castro successfully defied the political superiority of the United States in its sphere of influence, the changing world economy lessened American business and financial dominance in this region. With the onset of the world recession in the 1970s and the rise in influence of the OPEC oil cartel, the United States began to recognize that it faced stiff competition from a number of countries that previously had been inactive in Central America and the Caribbean. Countries like Japan, West Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Spain and Canada along with some of the emerging Latin American economies like Brazil and Mexico challenged the long standing United States domination of trade and investment in the region.

Even though the United States remained the primary trade, aid and investment partner with the countries of Central America and the Caribbean, the influx of foreign competition cut into its trade percentages and provided these countries

with alternative sources of capital for development projects. Moreover, the huge bills incurred by these countries when OPEC increased oil prices forced them to diversify their economies by seeking assistance from a number of sources so as not to become too dependent on the United States.

The OPEC oil price escalation also had an emotional impact on United States relations in its sphere of influence and served to further lessen our ability to dominate the economics of this region. Facing enormous debts as a result of payments for oil, the countries of Central America and the Caribbean sought greater access to United States markets and more advantageous terms of trade. The response from the United States, which also had severe balance of payments problems, was either to deny access or to pass protective legislation that increased trade barriers.

The reaction to these steps by the United States was unusually hostile and was expressed in terms that signaled a new found independence and a determination on the part of these countries never to permit their future to depend on American goodwill. As a result, the leaders of many Central American and Caribbean nations became more aggressive in their trade talks with the United States and intensified their efforts to open up their economies to new sources of trade, aid and investment. The days of one-sided, paternalistic commercial and financial relations with the United States were over.

The Sandinistas and the "No Second Cuba" Theory

One of the major policy positions taken by the United States Government after the Cuban revolution was that this country would never permit "another Cuba." Presumably a "second Cuba" would begin the process of falling dominoes in Latin America and create a threat to our national security.

Under President Lyndon Johnson the United States exercised its power to prevent a "second Cuba" when it sent 23,000 troops to the Dominican Republic in

1965 to put down an urban civil war. Since the Johnson Administration was able to stop the fighting and diminish the influence of the leftist rebels in the new government that was formed, Washington was pleased with the "no second Cuba" policy. It seemed that we could stop revolution and regain our control over this region through swift military intervention. Castro would perhaps be just an aberration.

But the Vietnam War followed, and we learned to our dismay that not all interventions end in success. We also lost a good deal of our enthusiasm for interfering in the internal matters of another country, no matter how threatened an ally was by communist aggression. The memory of domestic opposition to the war and the costs, human and monetary, of fighting a guerrilla war made Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter reluctant to play policemen to the world.

Even though the Vietnam War ended, the revolutionary aspirations of people in the less-developed countries remained active. This time the revolution was in Nicaragua, where a guerilla army called the Sandinistas was pitted against the repressive, but pro-U.S. Government of Anastasio Somoza. When the Sandinista rebels showed remarkable ability to sustain their war and later achieve significant victories over U.S. trained government troops, our country was once again thrust into a dilemma over the proper response to a leftist challenge in our sphere of influence. The United States could exert its economic, military and propaganda power to keep



Castro playing baseball

(Lee Lockwood/Black Star)

Somoza in office and thereby retain the viability of the "no second Cuba" doctrine, or it could refuse to become entangled in the internal guerrilla war to uphold the government of one of Latin America's most repressive and corrupt dictators.

In an earlier era the choice would have been an easy one, as the United States sent out its fleet and a contingent of Marines. But in the late 1970s, on the heels of our Vietnam debacle, the Carter Administration revealed the internal conflicts that come with the knowledge that time and circumstances have changed the way the U. S. views itself and its sphere of influence. A combination of public hostility to Somoza, Congressional opposition to further intervention, criticism from Latin American nations, and a President who was reluctant to exercise American might created a policy marked by apprehension, vacillation, contradiction and half-hearted support for both sides. Even though the Nicaraguan revolution was following a course somewhat similar to the Cuban revolution, the Carter Administration was both unable and unwilling to take steps that would firmly reestablish our control of this vital country.

By refusing to intervene to stop the Sandinistas, the United States not only negated its "no second Cuba" pledge, but more importantly it acknowledged that the circumstances once conducive to an aggressive maintenance of our sphere of influence had changed dramatically. To some, this was an example of what came to be called the "Vietnam syndrome," but to others it was rather another sign that we could no longer control the destiny of neighboring countries as we had in the past. Whatever the reason, the revolution in Nicaragua further adjusted the geopolitics of the region and set the stage for El Salvador and a new U. S. President who approached our status in Central America and the Caribbean in a far different manner.

Ronald Reagan and the Attempt at Regaining Our Sphere of Influence

When Ronald Reagan came into office in January of 1981, he made it clear that his Administration would seek to reestablish a respected United States presence in the Central American-Caribbean region. Using his strongly anti-communist beliefs as a springboard for action, Reagan sought to meet head on what he felt was Marxist revolution at our doorstep. Unlike Jimmy Carter who abhorred Somoza's human rights violations, Ronald Reagan emphasized combating communism and protecting our southern border from revolution.

To achieve his aim, Reagan reminded the American people that Central America was within our sphere of influence and therefore had to be protected from internal instability and external expansionism. The President renamed this region the Caribbean Basin to help accent its importance and proximity to the United States and reintroduced the domino theory to suggest that failure to shore up pro-U.S. governments in this region could eventually lead to a series of crumbling governments, ending with Mexico. The message came through clearly -- the United States must reassert its ability to control the future of this region, because the decline of our influence has created a significant threat to the nation's security.

The means to achieve this reassertion of American power were presented in the form of a two-pronged program that linked capital formation with containment. In 1981, the Administration unveiled its Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), which sought to use free trade agreements and healthy doses of foreign aid as a means of drawing the countries of the region closer to the United States, while also encouraging American businesses through favorable tax incentives to regain our competitive advantage. The foreign aid component of the CBI -- \$350 million -- was passed by Congress in

Instances of use of Central America and the

- 1901 - Colombia (State of Panama) - November 20 - December 4**
To protect American property on the Isthmus and to keep transit lines open during serious revolutionary disturbances.
- 1902 - Colombia (State of Panama) - September 17 - November 18**
To place armed guards on all trains crossing the Isthmus and to keep the railroad line open.
- 1903 - Honduras - March 23 to 30 or 31**
To protect the American consulate and the steamship wharf at Puerto Cortez during a period of revolutionary activity.
- 1903-14 - Panama**
To protect American interests and lives during and following the revolution for independence from Colombia over construction of the Isthmian Canal. With brief intermissions, United States Marines were stationed on the Isthmus from November 4, 1903 to January 21, 1914, to guard American interests.
- 1904 - Dominican Republic - January 2 to February 11**
To protect American interests in Puerto Plata and Sosua and Santo Domingo City during revolutionary fighting.
- 1904 - Panama - November 17 to 24**
To protect American lives and property at Aneon at the time of a threatened insurrection.
- 1906-08 - Cuba - September 1906 to January 1909**
Intervention to restore order, protect foreigners, and establish a stable government after serious revolutionary activity.
- 1907 - Honduras - March 18 to June 8**
To protect American interests during a war between Honduras and Nicaragua; troops were stationed for a few days or weeks in Trujillo, Celba, Puerto Cortez, San Pedro, Laguna and Choloma.
- 1910 - Nicaragua - February 22**
During a civil war, to get information of conditions at Corinto, May 19 to September 4, to protect American interests at Bluefields.
- 1911 - Honduras - January 26 and some weeks thereafter**
To protect American lives and interests during a civil war in Honduras.
- 1912 - Panama**
Troops, on request of both political parties, supervised elections outside the Canal Zone.
- 1912 - Cuba - June 5 to August 5**
To protect American interests on the Province of Oriente, and in Havana.
- 1912-25 - Nicaragua - August to November 1912**
To protect American interests during an attempted revolution. A small force serving as a legion guard and as a promoter of peace and governmental stability, remained until August 5, 1925.
- 1913 - Mexico - September 5 to 7**
A few marines landed at Claris Estero to aid in evacuating American citizens and others from the Yaqui Valley, made dangerous for foreigners by civil strife.
- 1914 - Haiti - January 29 to February 9, February 20 to 21, October 19**
To protect American nationals in a time of dangerous unrest.
- 1914 - Dominican Republic - June and July**
During a revolutionary movement, United States naval forces by gunfire stopped the bombardment of Puerto Plata, and by threat of force maintained Santo Domingo City as a neutral zone.
- 1914-17 - Mexico**
The undeclared Mexican-American hostilities following the Dolphin affair and Villa's raids included capture of Vera Cruz and later Pershing's expedition into northern Mexico.
- 1915-34 - Haiti - July 28, 1915 to August 15, 1934**
To maintain order during a period of chronic and threatened insurrection.
- 1916-24 - Dominican Republic - May 1916 to September 1924**
to maintain order during a period of chronic threatened insurrection.

1982, but it was not until August, 1983 that the trade and tax sections of the bill were voted out, only to have the Congress limit the tax incentives to conventions and cruise ship deductions and place a number of protective stipulations on the entry of certain goods into the United States. Despite the delay and the restrictions, the CBI remains a key part of the Reagan policy to expand our influence in the Caribbean Basin.

While the CBI was working its way through the Congress, the Reagan Administration was embarking on its most controversial policy initiative -- containment of further communist expansion in our sphere of influence. The policy of containment was used by this country in Europe after World War II as a means of preventing the further advance of Soviet communism. In the Reagan view, containment could once again be employed as a way of preventing the spread of revolutionary activity in Central America. To implement the policy of containment, the Reagan Administration began pumping millions of dollars of economic and military

U.S. Armed Forces in Caribbean — 1901-1983

1917-22 - Cuba

To protect American interests during an insurrection and subsequent unsettled conditions. Most of the U. S. armed forces left Cuba by August 1919, but two companies remained at Camaguey until February 1922.

1918-19 - Mexico

After withdrawal of the Pershing expedition, our troops entered Mexico in pursuit of bandits at least three times in 1918 and six in 1919. In August 1918 American and Mexican troops fought at Nogales.

1918-20 - Panama

For police duty according to treaty stipulations, at Chirique, during election disturbances and subsequent unrest.

1919 - Honduras - September 8 to 12

A landing force was sent ashore to maintain order in a neutral zone during an attempted revolution.

1920 - Guatemala - April 9 to 27

To protect the American Legation and other American interests, such as the cable station, during a period of fighting between Unionists and the Government of Guatemala.

1921 - Panama-Costa Rica

American naval squadrons demonstrated in April on both sides of the Isthmus to prevent war between the two countries over a boundary dispute.

1924 - February 28 to March 31, September 10 to 15

To protect American lives and interests during election hostilities.

1925 - Honduras - April 29 to 21

To protect foreigners at La Ceiba during a political upheaval.

1925 - Panama - October 12 to 23

Strikes and rent riots led to the landing of about six hundred American troops to keep order and protect American interests.

1926-33 - Nicaragua - May 7 to June 5, 1926; August 27, 1926 to January 3, 1933

The coup d'etat of General Cnamorro aroused revolutionary activities leading to the landing of American marines to protect the interests of the U. S. United States forces came and went, but seem not to have left the country entirely until January 3, 1933. Their work included activity against the outlaw leader Sandino in 1928.

1933 - Cuba

During a revolution against President Gerardo Machado naval forces demonstrated but no landing was made.

1959-60 - The Caribbean

2d Marine Ground Task Force was deployed to protect U. S. nationals during the Cuban crisis.

1962 - Cuba

President Kennedy instituted a "quarantine" on the shipment of offensive missiles to Cuba from the Soviet Union. He also warned the Soviet Union that the launching of any missile from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere would bring about U. S. nuclear retaliation on the Soviet Union. A negotiated settlement was achieved in a few days.

1965 - Dominican Republic

Intervention to protect lives and property during a Dominican revolt. More troops were sent as the U. S. feared the revolutionary forces were coming increasingly under Communist control.

1980 to Present - El Salvador

United States military advisors sent to instruct government troops in anti-guerrilla tactics.

1982 to Present - Honduras

United States Military advisors sent to train government troops.

1983 - Grenada

United States military forces invade Grenada

Adapted from U.S. Library of Cong. Foreign Affairs Div. Committee
Print, 94th Cong. 1st sess. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print Off. 1975, p. 58-66.

assistance to pro-U.S. countries in the region; more civilian and military advisors were sent to train the armies of El Salvador and Honduras; sophisticated radar and tracking equipment was used to pinpoint the transfer of weapons from Cuba and Nicaragua to the rebels; and an occasional resort to old-fashioned gunboat diplomacy served to remind the rebels and their supporters that the United States was serious about stopping the spread of communist influence in the area.

The epitome of Reagan's containment policy can be seen in the October, 1983 invasion of the tiny island of Grenada. With the assassination of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop (who was beginning to moderate his socialist revolution and move closer to the United States) by doctrinaire Marxists with ties to Cuba and the Soviet Union, the Reagan Administration wasted little time in sending the troops to restore a pro-United States government. Although eighteen U. S. soldiers were lost and scores wounded, the Grenadian invasion was judged a stunning success.

But despite the strong popular support for the Grenada invasion in the United States, President Reagan has become more aware that in places like El Salvador and Nicaragua regaining the initiative from the Marxists may not be as quick and easy as on a Caribbean island with 100,000 citizens and a militia of a few thousand. Already public opinion has shown disfavor with Reagan's Central American policy. Many in Congress are bothered by the overt signs of war and the covert machinations of the CIA, and our neighbors in Latin America are fearful that U. S. involvement in the Salvadoran revolution may expand the fighting to all of Central America. To those with vivid memories of the Vietnam War era, the answer is not containment but negotiation with the rebels, and with their supporters in Nicaragua and Cuba.

For its part, the Reagan Administration seems cautious about entering into negotiations with the rebels and their supporters and more interested in winning a victory. Although the Administration is reluctant to state it publicly, a victory in El Salvador means more than just a defeat of the insurgents; it also would serve as a clear sign of United States resurgence in Central America and our willingness to follow a course of action that combats the spread of a foreign ideology in our traditional sphere of influence. It is this concern with reestablishing our preeminence in Central America that has made winning in El Salvador of critical importance. El Salvador has become more than just a communist-inspired guerilla war; it is now a test of our ability to maintain control in a region that we view as vital to our national interest.

Limits on Reagan Policy in Central America

Although President Reagan is following a path designed to strengthen our position in Central America, it is important to point out that the attainment of his objective may be complicated by new forces at work in the region and at home. One of the most recent developments in the Central American crisis is that the United States faces a more unified and vocal Latin American community of nations. Whereas in the past the United States "handled" an uprising or a debt collection fracas by itself and cared little for the views of its neighbors, today the United States cannot ignore the fact that there are other influential actors in this revolutionary drama. Countries like Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama that form what is termed the Contadora group are unwilling to take a backseat in this crisis. They have lobbied hard to force a negotiated settlement and have shown the Reagan Administration that they can serve as effective intermediaries with the rebels. Moreover, these countries have stated categorically that they will not tolerate a land war in this region, especially one that involves United States troops. It is this unity of purpose and forceful presentation of concerns that has reminded the President that to act in Central America without recognizing the impact on the region would be foolhardy and counterproductive.

What is potentially more complicating and serious than the new found influence of the Latin American nations is that the Central American crisis has begun to be viewed in terms of an East-West confrontation. Even though Khrushchev took his missiles out of Cuba in 1962, Russian designs on the Caribbean Basin have not diminished. In fact, recent analysis confirms that Central America and the Caribbean have seen a marked increase in the Soviet presence in the last ten years. Soviet trade representatives, arms merchants, cultural exchanges, KGB agents, navy flotillas, fishing fleets and diplomats can be found throughout the region.

The Soviet presence may indeed serve to support President Reagan's claims of communist expansionism at our doorstep, but it also complicates a solution to the crisis and heightens the danger of a superpower showdown. What was a relatively small and

localized conflict could evolve into regional competition between the United States and the Soviet Union for control of the Caribbean Basin. With Cuba supplying Soviet arms to the Salvadoran rebels, Russian Mig-21's rumored to be heading for Nicaragua and a Soviet base near completion in Grenada before U.S. troops arrived, the Reagan Administration has enough examples of Soviet designs on this region to justify our involvement. Unfortunately this competition can develop a life of its own and build to proportions where the war in El Salvador becomes secondary to the confrontation between the two superpowers.

The key to avoiding a U.S.-Soviet confrontation in Central America is Cuba. Since taking office, the Reagan Administration has spoken harshly toward the regime of Fidel Castro and has been unwilling to normalize relations with Havana. The Grenada invasion where U.S. troops killed twenty-four Cubans and captured hundreds of others has done nothing to bring these two enemies together. In fact, the inclination of the Reagan Administration at present seems to be to meet the Cuban expansionist efforts head on even though there are dangers in such a policy. It is important for the President to remember that such a policy position could easily spur the Russians to become directly involved in the Caribbean Basin in order to insure that Castro and his revolutionary allies will not be intimidated by the United States.

Finally, when one speaks of the complex nature of public policy formation and implementation in Central America, the impact of domestic politics cannot be ignored. A great deal has changed in the United States since Theodore Roosevelt "took" the Panama Canal or Woodrow Wilson sent General Pershing across the Mexican border to capture Pancho Villa. Today, foreign policy development is conducted in an atmosphere of Congressional oversight, extensive media coverage, interest group pressure and forceful public opinion.

Much has been made by President Reagan of our unwillingness since Vietnam to utilize this country's strength to achieve foreign policy objectives. But this so-called unwillingness on the part of past presidents stems not so much from a Vietnam backlash as from a recognition that it is now more difficult to initiate and carry through to completion a specific foreign policy, especially one which calls for some form of military involvement. Today, a president who seeks to take aggressive action in order to combat communism or maintain our influence must contend with legal restraints, popular demonstrations, partisan politics and a sceptical citizenry. The roadblocks to

successful foreign policy-making are so numerous that national leaders must be extremely strong-willed or courageous to propose and carry out a particular course of action.

Already, President Reagan's efforts to regain influence in Central America point up the limits of foreign policy-making in our democracy. The spending of additional millions of dollars on the CIA's covert war in Honduras has met with a hostile reception from Congress, the ravages of war in Central America are captured on film and compete with the President as he seeks support for further involvement, and a host of human rights organizations place unrelenting pressure on the White House to curtail its support of rightist military officers, even though these officers are firm adherents to the objectives of the Reagan Administration.

So far, Mr. Reagan has met his critics head on and taken this country further into the Central American revolution. But what the President must remember (as Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon found out to their dismay) is that there is a point beyond which a president's will and communicative skills cannot easily overcome the labyrinth of opposition to a particular foreign policy decision. In modern day American politics, foreign policy formation and implementation must derive from consensus rather than from the determination of the White House. If Mr. Reagan is to succeed in reestablishing United States preeminence in the Caribbean Basin, he will have to do so by convincing the numerous constituencies in this country that it is in our national interest to engage in activities that bring us perilously close to a Vietnam-like commitment.

A Look At The Future of Our Sphere of Influence

Americans do not admit defeat easily nor accept the view that our power in the world arena is declining. And yet, it is essential for every major nation to periodically assess its standing in the world or in a particular region of that world and make some judgements on the proper course to follow.

There is no question that our position in the Central American-Caribbean sphere of influence has changed since the early 1960s. We should not be surprised by the competition, the revolution, the nationalism, and our inability to control our neighbors for our own interests. After nearly a century of dominance, a decline in influence was inevitable.

But what is surprising is the vigor that the current Administration brings to its attempt at regaining our position in this sphere. The Reagan Administration is clearly on a

mission to insure that friendly governments remain in power in Central America and that hostile movements are unable to spread their influence. President Reagan firmly believes in the domino theory and the possibility that our southern border could be jeopardized by left-wing revolution traveling northward from El Salvador. The dollars, the guns, the advisors, the aircraft carriers, and the tough talk stem from a real fear that we are on the defensive in our sphere of influence and may not be doing enough to regain the initiative. Grenada may be the first step in a long process of regaining complete control of our sphere of influence.

The Reagan analysis of our decline in the Caribbean Basin may be exaggerated, since many Administration critics do not see a revolution in Mexico, or a United States encircled by the communists. And yet, this American President has embarked on a mission to establish our power position as it was prior to 1959. As to the success of the Reagan mission, only time will tell. The President's actions may strengthen our hold on the Caribbean Basin or they may alienate our neighbors and encourage the revolutionary left to dig in deeper. The only certainty about the Reagan mission is that it comes at a time when the forces of change can be found everywhere. Not only has our sphere of influence changed, but so have the internal political conditions in the United States necessary to assure a successful mission. The future of United States policy in its sphere of influence thus depends on how well we adjust to the new geopolitics of the region and on whether we are able to muster the same vigor as our President as he sets out on this mission.



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Photo by Robert Ward